

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

USSS-00 NSAE-00 INRE-00 /031 W

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O R 161234Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1346

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T ROME 11210

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IT, XF

SUBJECT: RESUPPLY TO ISRAEL

REF: A) STATE 204562; B) ROME 11067; C) USDAO ROME DTG 151450Z

OCT (NOTAL); D) ROME 11194

1. EMBASSY SEES LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT ITALIAN GOVT WILL APPROVE US LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF ISRAEL FROM ITALIAN SOIL. AS REFS B-D INDICATED, ITALIAN GOVT IS EXTRAORDINARILY SENSITIVE NOT ONLY TO CERTAIN PUBLIC OUTCRY FROM COMMUNISTS IN PARTICULAR THAT WOULD ENSUE FROM SUCH OPERATIONS IF THEY BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF HER VIRTUALLY COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON OIL SUPPLIES FROM THE MIDEAST. IN A FEW WORDS, GOI DOES NOT RPT NOT WANT TO RISK GETTING ON WRONG SIDE OF ARABS. IF, AS NOTED IN REF C, ITALIAN AIR MINISTRY OBJECTED TO US REPLENISHMENT AIRCRAFT FOR ISRAEL OVERFLYING ITALIAN TERRITORY, WE CANNOT REALISTICALLY EXPECT ITALIAN GOVT TO ADOPT A MORE POSITIVE STANCE TOWARDS WHAT WOULD BE EVEN MORE DIRECT ITALIAN INVOLVEMENT.

2. IF WE ARE TO OBTAIN GREATER ACCOMMODATION IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT ITALIAN COOPERATION WILL INCREASE IF ITALIANS BECOME PER-
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SUADED THAT THEIR ROLE WITH US WOULD FURTHER AN IMMINENT, FAIR, AND LASTING RESOLUTION OF MIDEAST CRISIS. TO THE EXTENT WE CAN BE CANDID REGARDING THE SECRETARY'S DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE CAN POINT TO REAL OR LIKELY PROGRESS TOWARD

PEACEFUL SOLUTION, WE MAY OBTAIN GREATER ITALIAN PARTICIPATION IN OUR EFFORT.

3. EMERGENCY LANDINGS ARE, OF COURSE, A DIFFERENT MATTER. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE NO DIFFICULTY IN SECURING ITALIAN APPROVAL TO SUCH LANDINGS WHEN LIFE IS AT STAKE. WE DO NOT SEE ANY NEED FOR ADVANCE APPROVAL OF THE GOI FOR THESE CONTINGENCIES AS THEY WOULD PRESUMABLY BE HANDLED ON AN AD HOC MILITARY-TO-MILITARY BASIS.

4. NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABOVE PESSIMISTIC PROGNOSIS RE LIKELY ITALIAN REACTION TO RESUPPLY OPERATIONS, WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE THE APPROACH PURSUANT TO THE US-ITALIAN AGREEMENT GOVERNING USE OF FACILITIES IN ITALY, IF WASHINGTON SO DECIDES.

4. PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION TO USE OF US FACILITIES IN ITALY FOR SUPPORT OF RESUPPLY OPERATION TO ISRAEL CAN BE EXPECTED GENERALLY TO FOLLOW PARTY LINES. COMMUNIST PRESS WILL BE CRITICAL. ISRAEL, HOWEVER, HAS ITS PARTISANS IN THE PRESS (PARTICULARLY THOSE SUPPORTING US POLICIES) AND THE ITALIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURE; THESE ARE ARTICULATE, AND INCLUDE SOME SOCIALISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. ITALIAN PUBLIC STILL MAY BE CONSIDERED GENERALLY PRO-ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH TO MUCH LESS EXTENT THAN DURING 1967 WAR. INDEPENDENT PRESS AND MAN-ON-THE-STREET APPEAR TO HAVE AS THEIR PRIMARY INTEREST A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES, ASSURANCE OF OIL SUPPLY, AND POSSIBLE REOPENING OF SUEZ CANAL WHICH OF CONTINUING PRIME INTEREST TO ITALIANS. THEREFORE THIS SEGMENT OF PRESS AND GENERAL PUBLIC LIKELY TO ASSESS ANY ITALIAN INVOLVEMENT IN US RESUPPLY OPERATION IN LIGHT OF HOW IT WOULD AFFECT THESE PRIMARY INTERESTS. IF US RESUPPLY CONSIDERED POSITIVE ELEMENT, IT WOULD RECEIVE GENERAL SUPPORT. RATIONALE WE PRESENT TO MEDIA AND PUBLIC MUST BE PERSUASIVE THAT US SUPPLY OPERATION WILL CONTRIBUTE TO LASTING PEACE IN MIDEAST, AND THUS FURTHER ITALIAN AIMS. WE WOULD STRESS HERE THAT WHICH IS NOW BEING PUBLICLY PRESENTED BY US SPOKESMEN WITH REGARD US DESIRE PREVENT MASSIVE SOVIET AIRLIFT FROM UNSETTLING MILITARY BALANCE IN AREA. THE BALANCE WE SEEK WOULD EXCLUDE A MILITARY SOLUTION BY EITHER SIDE AND THUS CONTRIBUTE THE BASIC CONFIDENCE NECESSARY TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A LASTING
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SOLUTION. VOLPE

NOTE BY OCT: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MR. FINNERTY S/S-O

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1973
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ROME11210
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750018-1107
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731065/abqcegwytel
Line Count: 101
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ROME
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: A) STATE 204562; B) ROME 11067; C) USDAO ROME DTG 151450Z OCT (NOTAL); D) ROME 11194
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25-Jul-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESUPPLY TO ISRAEL
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IT, XF
To: STATE INFO ANKARA
ATHENS
LONDON
MADRID
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005